AN announcement on the future of the Broadwater Marine Project was supposed to be made by now. What went wrong? Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney tells Paul Weston the road ahead.

Bulletin: Where are you at (with the project) ... there won't be a decision before February.

Jeff Seeney: I suppose there's a number of opportunities to decide whether we proceed further. And I guess at any of those decision points we could decide not to proceed further. But I don't foresee that. We are committed to ensuring this process settles the question of and for all I think the last government that looked at this made a political decision in the run-up to the election. That's not my intention. At the end of this process I want to be sure that we all understand everything there is to understand about the challenges of establishing a cruise ship terminal. Whether those challenges can be successfully met or not comes down to the decision at hand.

B: So a lot of what you're saying there comes down to the technical aspect of operating, getting cruise ships in.

J.S: First and foremost it is about getting a cruise ship into the Broadwater and being able to provide an access for passengers on the ship to the Gold Coast business community, all the attractions. After that, there is a whole range of other issues related to the whole size of the development that is being proposed as a way of funding the cruise ship terminal.

B: The (probability of the) casino licence and so forth, which is out of your (State Development's) realm.

J.S: No, the casino licence, the residential developments being proposed, brings a whole lot of challenges around service provision, traffic issues, the effect on the established market. Then there is the environmental challenges of dredging in the next decision point will be whether we proceed to a formal EIS for example, that's in relation to environmental issues. It's complex ... there's certainly no anticipation from me or the Government that it is something that is going to be resolved quickly.

B: So we're looking obviously some time well into next year.

J.S: Certainly, it could well be beyond that. A proper environmental impact statement could be expected to take a couple of years. B: What are you thought to be the proponent at state development? Do you need more?

J.S: Much, much more. That's why I say there is a series of decision points. The next one will be in relation to environmental issues, will be around the EIS. The Government has to be confident or at least we have to be convinced that there is at least a reasonable or average chance of getting a reasonable outcome. Otherwise we wouldn't commit the money that's required. To do an EIS study of the complexity of

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J.S: So the view that the Government could make a decision before the elec tion and it would hurt them electorally is in fact a wrong view. You're taking this on a purely technical basis.

J.S: I'm taking the opportunity to tell you that it won't be before the election.

B: And that's not because you fear you will lose seats and it will be electorally damaging.

J.S: As I said, we undertook to complete a very detailed and sophisticated process to determine once and for all what's involved in establishing a cruise ship in the Broadwater. At the end of this process I want a very clear understanding of what the technical issues are, what the environmental issues are and what the challenges are. How far the proponent wants to go in the process depends on the results in this process. I can tell you it has nothing to do with the election.

B: Has State Development got enough information in the coming months to send that reply to the proponent to say I'm sorry or yes this will be OIC?

J.S: We will be identifying what information we need in the next step in the process, we will be explaining to the proponent that this is the next step in the process, it will be up to them to decide whether to proceed or not.

B: Will you be advising on the likelihood of an EIS being made at any stage, or is it purely State Development.

J.S: It is something we will talk about to council regularly, especially when we get down to the final detail about water, sewerage and traffic. They have much more to do with council than with us.